

Message Text

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EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PERP, FR, SS, AG, MO
SUBJ: ROYAL COUNSELOR GUEDIRA'S VIEWS ON WESTERN SAHARAN PROBLEM
AND MAURITANIA

REF: PARIS 24500

1. MY AUGUST 4 CONVERSATION WITH REDA GUEDIRA WAS IN LARGE PART ON POSIBILITIES FOR A SOLUTION IN THE WESTERN SAHARA. GUEDIRA DESCRIBED MOROCCO'S VIEWS IN GENERAL TERMS WITHOUT SPECIFICS ON HIS PARIS VISIT OR TALK WITH GISCARD. HIS COMMENTS WERE, IN GENERAL, IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS AND TO MY STATEMENT THAT THE US WAS INTERESTED IN MOVING TOWARD A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO A TROUBLESOME PROBLEM AND IN SUPPORTING ANY INITIATIVES WHICH WOULD LEAD TO PEACE IN THE AREA.

2. GUEDIRA EMPHASIZED THAT MOROCCO WOULD SUPPORT AND WORK FOR ANY AN ALL EFFORTS FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTHION-- WHETHER THEY COME FROM PARIS, MADRID, HOUPHOUET-BOINGNY, THE OAU OR ALGIERS. MOROCCO SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS PART
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OF THE SPANISH SAHARA WAS NOT, HOWEVER, OPEN TO QUESTION. A PARTIAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WOULD BE LIKE TAKING ASPRIN FOR A SERIOUS ILLNESS; ITS EFFECT WOULD BE TEMPORARY AND ILLUSORY. ANY SOLUTION, THEREFORE, MUST BE A GLOBAL ONE IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THE FUNDAMENTAL TENSIONS IN THE AREA. GUEDIRA CHARACTERIZED PRESENT ALGERIAN TACTICS AS A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO

GIVE A CHIMERIC PICTURE OF MOVEMENT AND RAISE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF PEACE--PRINCIPALLY TO TRY TO CREATE UNCERTAINTY IN MAURITANIA AND PROBLEMS BETWEEN MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO.

3. WHEN I ASKED IF GIRM WAS INDEPENDENTLY EXPLORING PEACE PROSPECTS WITHOUT CONSULTING MOROCCO, GUEDIRA STATED THAT MOROCCO'S RELATIONS WITH MAURITANIA ARE CLOSE AND FULLY COORDINATED AND THAT MAURITANIA CLEARLY CANNOT AND DOES NOT WANT TO ACT WITHOUT MOROCCO. GUEDIRA SAID THE STATEMENT IN AUGUST 4 LE MONDE BY GIRM FONMIN LAGHDAF ACCURATELY GAVE FLAVOR OF GOM-GIRM RELATIONS. LAGHDAF WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MAURITANIA WITH ITS ALLY, MOROCCO "HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN FAVOR OF SETTING IN MOTION A DYNAMIC FOR PEACE IN THE SAHARA. WITH OUR MOROCCAN FRIENDS, WE ARE HAPPY THAT OUR CALL IN FAVOR OF PEACE HAS BEEN HEARD BY ALGERIA." LATER IN CONVERSATION, GUEDIRA ADDED A NUANCE TO HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE MAURITANIAN POSITION BY SAYING THAT THERE WAS "VERY" LITTLE CHANCE MAURITANIA WOULD ACT WITHOUT MOROCCO SINCE "WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL THAT MAURITANIA WANTS THE CLOSEST RELATIONS WITH US." WE ASSUME THIS MAY REFLECT MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR'S SNOUSSI'S VIEWS AS GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR KRYZA ABOUT "PROGRESSIVE" LEANING OF THREE MEMBERS OF GIRM (NOUAKCHOTT 2207).
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4. DURING OUR CONVERSATION GUEDIRA TOUCHED ON A NUMBER OF STANDARD MOROCCOAN POSITIONS AND ARGUMENTS ON THE SAHARA, STRESSING PARTICULARLY THE ANOMALY AND DANGER WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM CONSTITUTING A NATION OF SEVENTY-ODD THOUSAND, LARGELY ILLITERATE NOMADIC PEOPLE. THIS, IN HIS VIEW, WOULD BE A PRE-POSTEROUS PROPOSITION FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE UN AND THE OAU, AS WELL AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO IRRIDENTISM IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD AND, CONSEQUENTLY, A GRAVE DANGER TO STABILITY.

5. COMMENT: MOROCCO CLEARLY REMAINS UNYIELDING ON THE QUESTION OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS PART OF THE WESTERN SAHARA. MOREOVER, THE CLEAR IMPLICATION OF SEVERAL OF GUEDIRA'S REMARKS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE NOTED IN PARA 4, WAS THAT MOROCCO IS OPPOSED TO THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE OUT OF THE MAURITANIAN PORTION. WE BELIEVE THAT ON THIS POINT GUEDIRA IS ACCURATELY PORTRAYING THE PRESENT MOROCCAN POSITION, ALTHOUGH HIS ATTITUDE MAY STEM IN PART FROM WHAT MOROCCANS SEE AS A LACK OF ALGERIAN FLEXIBILITY IN

RESPONSE TO PAST FEELERS. WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE
POSSIBILITY OF MOVEMENT ON THE MOROCCAN SIDE AS
MATTERS EVOLVE, ALTHOUGH IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT ANY
POSSIBILITY OF A MOROCCAN READINESS TO COMPROMISE ON
THE QUESTION OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE IN THE MAURITANIAN
SAHARA IS WELL DOWN THE ROAD. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER,
THAT MOROCCO MIGHT BE WILLING TO CONSIDER SOME SORT OF
CONFEDERAL AUTONOMY FOR A WESTERN SAHRAN REGION
WITHIN THE MAURITANIAN STATE AS PART OF A COMPROMISE
IN WHICH ALGERIA WOULD RECONGIZE THE LEGITIMACY OF
MOROCCO'S SAHARA CLAIMS. THE MAIN QUESTION IS WHETHER
THERE IS ANY GIVE IN THE ALGERIAN POSITION ON THIS
POINT. AFTER LISTENING TO GUEDIRA, WE CONCLUDE HE
SHARES THE DOWNBEAT ASSESSMENT OF FRENCH MFA SECGEN
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6. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS.
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